

## Message Text

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ORIGIN NODS-00

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DRAFTED BY NEA:MDRAPER:JD  
APPROVED BY NEA:HHAUNDERS  
IO:GHELMAN  
S/S-O:LFLEISCHER

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O 140119Z APR 78 ZFF6  
FM SECSTATE WASHDC  
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USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE  
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INFO WHITE HOUSE IMMEDIATE 0000  
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AMEMBASSY TEHRAN PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY AMMAN PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY JIDDA PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT PRIORITY

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EXDIS DISTRIBUTE AS NODIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PBOR, UNSC, MOPS, LE, IS, XF

SUBJECT: ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL AND UNIFIL DEPLOYMENT

1. WE HAVE DECIDED TO DOUBLE TRACK THE EFFORTS OF  
AMBASSADOR LEWIS BY PRESSING THE ISRAELIS HERE ALSO FOR  
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A WITHDRAWAL STATEMENT AND TIMETABLE. SAUNDERS SPOKE  
BRIEFLY TO DINITZ EVENING OF APRIL 12, AND DINITZ WILL BE  
COMING IN ON FRIDAY, APRIL 14; FOR MORE EXTENSIVE EXCHANGE.  
TODAY, SAUNDERS, JOINED BY HELMAN AND DRAPER, REVIEWED  
WITH ISRAELI COUNSELOR BENTSUR THE SITUATION AS WE SEE IT.

2. SAUNDERS MADE HIS PRESENTATION IN THE CONTEXT OF U.S.

RECOGNITION OF THE WHOLE RANGE OF PROBLEMS THE CHAOTIC SOUTH LEBANON SITUATION POSED FOR ISRAEL, OUR COMPASSION FOR THE VICTIMS OF ATTACKS FROM THIS AREA, AND OUR EFFORTS NOW - AS IN THE PAST - TO ESTABLISH CONDITIONS IN SOUTH LEBANON THAT WOULD REDUCE THE THREAT TO ISRAEL SIGNIFICANTLY. HE POINTED OUT, HOWEVER, THAT WE NOW HAVE A CHICKEN VERSUS AN EGG PROBLEM, WE FACED HEAVY PRESSURES THROUGH THE SECURITY COUNCIL FOR ACTION TO CONDEMN OR DEPLORE THE PROGRESS OF ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL. A SPECIAL FINANCIAL SESSION IS COMING UP WHEN KEY THIRD WORLD STATES MAY SHOW RELUCTANCE TO CONTRIBUTE FINANCIALLY. THE TROOP CONTRIBUTORS ARE ALREADY CONCERNED THAT UNIFIL WILL BE MADE

TO APPEAR AS COVERING A PROLONGED ISRAELI PRESENCE.

3. WHAT WE NEED, SAUNDERS CONTINUED, WAS AN AGREED FRAMEWORK, THROUGH WHICH A FLESHED OUT UNIFIL WOULD BE DEPLOYED AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE, TAKING OVER THE CRITICAL JUNCTIONS AND TOWNS WHICH WOULD FORESTALL A RETURN OF THE PALESTINIAN ARMED PRESENCE. TO SPUR THIS PROCESS, WE NEED FROM ISRAEL AN EXPLICIT STATEMENT OR WITHDRAWAL SCHEDULE MAKING CLEAR THAT ISRAEL WOULD WITHDRAW FULLY BY THE END OF APRIL.

4. SINCE WE FULLY ACCEPTED ISRAELI ASSURANCES THAT THEY WOULD WITHDRAW, OUR ONLY DISAGREEMENT REVOLVED ABOUT THE LINKAGE WITH UNIFIL DEPLOYMENT. 425 DID NOT MAKE ANY  
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LINKAGE. WE THOUGHT THE SITUATION WAS TOO DIFFICULT AND TOO COMPLEX TO TIE WITHDRAWAL TO DEPLOYMENT WHICH, IN ANY EVENT, MIGHT BE IMPERFECT IN SOME SENSES. A PROLONGED ISRAELI OCCUPATION WOULD NOT SERVE U.S. OR ISRAELI INTERESTS AND, GIVEN THE STARK ALTERNATIVES, WE BELIEVED IT WAS ESSENTIAL TO MAKE THE UNIFIL OPERATION WORK, EVEN AT SOME RISK.

5. HELMAN POINTED OUT THAT THERE WERE DANGERS THAT UNIFIL ITSELF COULD UNRAVEL. SUSPICIONS EXIST AMONG UN MEMBERS THAT ISRAEL DOES NOT INTEND TO WITHDRAW FULLY. HE STRESSED THAT SUSPICION ACTUALLY EXISTS NOT ONLY IN THE EXPECTED QUARTERS BUT ALSO AMONG GOVERNMENTS WHICH HAVE BEEN FRIENDLY TO ISRAEL. THE U.S. HAD USED TO GOOD EFFECT ISRAELI ASSURANCES ON WITHDRAWAL, THE INFORMATION ABOUT THE PROJECTED EARLY STAGES OF THEIR WITHDRAWAL, AND BEGIN'S KNESSET COMMENTS CASTING UNIFIL IN A POSITIVE LIGHT. WHEN BENTSUR EXPRESSED SURPRISE THAT THESE ARGUMENTS HAD NOT BEEN PERSUASIVE, HELMAN NOTED THAT IN A SENSE IT WAS DIFFICULT FOR US TO ARGUE THE ISRAELI CASE ON POLITICAL OR JURIDICAL GROUNDS, SINCE THERE WAS NO LINKAGE BETWEEN THE THREE MAJOR POINTS OF 425. UNTIL

THIS WEEK, WHEN INITIAL ISRAELI WITHDRAWALS COMMENCED IN EARNEST, MANY CRITICS OF ISRAEL HAD BEEN ABLE TO ARGUE THAT THERE HAD NOT BEEN CONCRETE ACTIONS TO MATCH ISRAELI WORDS.

6. WE THEN POINTED OUT THAT WE HAD NOT BEEN SITTING ON OUR HANDS. WE HAD PRESSED OTHER COUNTRIES, INDEPENDENTLY OF THE UN, TO MAKE TROOP CONTRIBUTIONS AT THE EARLIEST POSSIBLE MOMENT. WE REVIEWED THE PROJECTIONS FOR THE DEPLOYMENT OF THE NEPALESE CONTINGENT AND THE NIGERIANS. WE EXPRESSED THE OPINION THAT UNIFIL SHOULD BE IN FAIRLY GOOD SHAPE MILITARILY BY THE BEGINNING OF THE LAST WEEK IN APRIL. WE HOPED IT WOULD BE UP TO FULL STRENGTH BY THE

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END OF THE MONTH.

7. WE BRIEFLY REVIEWED OTHER EFFORTS THAT WOULD TEND TO SERVE ISRAELI INTERESTS IN THE LONG TERM, INCLUDING SETTING THE STAGE FOR NEUTRALIZATION OF THE NO-MAN'S LAND ABOVE THE LITANI AND BELOW THE RED LINE. WE SAID WE WERE SUPPORTING EFFORTS TO MAKE POSSIBLE AN EXPANSION OF UNIFIL TO 6,000 MEN AND THAT WE HAD TAKEN STEPS TO PREVENT UNIFIL'S MANDATE FROM BEING INTERPRETED TOO STRICTLY.

8. WHEN BENTSUR MENTIONED THAT HE THOUGHT WEIZMAN WOULD BE GIVING LEWIS A MORE COMPLETE DESCRIPTION OF ISRAELI INTENTIONS AFTER HIS VISIT TO SOUTH LEBANON, WE EXPLAINED THAT WEIZMAN HAD INDEED BEEN IN TOUCH WITH LEWIS. HE PROVIDED A LIST OF AREAS FROM WHICH ISRAELI FORCES WOULD BE WITHDRAWN IN ORDER OF PRIORITY. WE HAD NO QUARREL WITH THE PRIORITIES, SAUNDERS SAID, BUT IT RAISED A MAJOR QUESTION. ONE COULD INFER FROM THIS LIST THAT THE ISRAELIS WOULD WITHDRAW ONLY TO THE AREAS PRESENTLY OCCUPIED BY THE CHRISTIAN MILITIAS. IF SUCH A LIST BECAME KNOWN TO OTHER UN MEMBERS, THEIR SUSPICIONS WOULD IMMEDIATELY BE AROUSED AND THIS COULD CAUSE GREATER COMPLICATIONS.

9. BENISUR CONCLUDED THE CONVERSATION BY SAYING THAT MORE COULD BE ACHIEVED IN HIS OPINION IF THE UN COULD PRESENT ISRAEL WITH DETAILED FUTURE DEPLOYMENT SCHEDULES INVOLVING THE NEW CONTINGENTS AND ADDITIONS TO EXISTING CONTINGENTS. THEN THE ISRAELIS COULD MATCH THESE SCHEDULES WITH THEIR OWN WITHDRAWALS. HE INDICATED THAT THE INFORMATION WE HAD GIVEN HIM WAS HELPFUL, AND WE PROMISED THAT WE WOULD CONTINUE TO PROVIDE NEW INFORMATION AS IT DEVELOPS.

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10. SAUNDERS STRESSED THEN, AND IN EARLIER POINTS OF THE CONVERSATION, THAT ON-THE-GROUND COORDINATION BETWEEN THE UN AND ISRAEL ON AN ORDERLY WITHDRAWAL AND DEPLOYMENT SCHEDULE WAS FINE BUT IT HAD TO BE TREATED AS DISTINCT FROM THE ISSUE OF LINKAGE, WHICH COULD NOT BE SUPPORTED.

CHRISTOPHER

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## Message Attributes

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**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
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**Decaption Date:** 20 Mar 2014  
**Decaption Note:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
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